

On average, the life expectancy of men is six years less than that of women. Despite these statistics, men often think their health status is excellent.

The poor health status of men affects their families and community at large.

The Georgia Department of Human Resources and Department of Community Health are collaborating on efforts to improve the status of men's health. We hope you will utilize the information in this booklet to improve your health and the health of men in your family and community.



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HEALTH GUIDE

for Georgia Men



Your Health

You're in Charge

Men do many things well. We excel at work, at home and at school. However, there's a vital part of our everyday lives that, for one reason or another, many of us overlook. That's our emotional and physical health.

We down play our aches, pains and unhappiness, playing them off to be "nothing." By not paying attention to our bodies' call for help, something minor very well could end up being a big deal.

Simply put, without regular physical exams, healthy eating, exercise and awareness of our mental health, we put ourselves in harm's way. By mapping out a healthy lifestyle, you can set out on the road to good health.

The first stop on that road is putting together your own personal health team: doctor, eye doctor, dentist, and pharmacist. Use them along with this Guide to determine the wellness path that's right for you. Then along the way, get regular preventive physical exams, screenings, medications review, and immunizations.

Ask plenty of questions. Learn all you can about what's good and what's not—for your body and mind.

The **"Take Action"** points can help you take an informed and active role in your health. Use this guide for basic information about staying healthy. Read it, underline it, use it!

Healthy Eating

Small Changes Make Big Differences

We've heard the saying: "You are what you eat," hundreds of times. There might not be a truer statement. If you visit the fast-food lane more often than the produce aisle, you'll want to review what you are eating.

You can eat tasty and nutritious food and get enough vitamins and minerals at the same time. When choosing food, look for low saturated fat and high fiber choices.

Men's Daily Food Suggestions¹

<i>Food Servings</i>	<i>Serving examples</i>
6 to 11 servings of bread, cereal, rice and pasta.	1 slice of bread, 1/2 cup of oatmeal, rice or pasta.
3 to 5 servings of vegetables.	1 cup of raw leafy vegetables, 1/2 cup other vegetables, 1/2 cup juice.
2 or 3 servings of fruit and nuts.	Piece of fresh fruit, 1/2 cup of chopped fruit, 1/2 cup of juice.
2 or 3 servings of milk or yogurt.	1 cup of milk or yogurt, 1.5 ounces of cheese.
2 or 3 servings of meat, poultry, fish, beans and eggs.	2 or 3 ounces (about the size of a deck of playing cards) of cooked lean meat, fish or poultry; 1/2 cup of cooked dried beans; 1 egg; 2 tablespoons of peanut butter.
Eat fats, oils and sweets sparingly.	

A variety of food is the best source of vitamins and minerals. In general, do not take more than the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA). Make sure to get your daily supply of these men-friendly nutrients:

Magnesium	<i>Functions to:</i> Regulate heartbeat, may protect against heart disease and high blood pressure.
	<i>Found in:</i> Baked potatoes, beans, nuts, oatmeal, peanut butter, whole grains, green leafy vegetables and seafood.
Beta carotene	<i>Functions to:</i> Boost immunity and prevent cancer.
	<i>Found in:</i> Sweet potatoes, apricots, carrots, broccoli, spinach and cantaloupe.
Vitamin B6	<i>Functions to:</i> Boost immunity, helps prevent several types of cancer, kidney stones and restless sleep.
	<i>Found in:</i> Bananas, meat, fish, eggs, leafy greens
Vitamin C	<i>Functions to:</i> Fight infection, lower cholesterol, may prevent cancer.
	<i>Found in:</i> Broccoli, citrus fruit, green peppers, strawberries, papayas, watermelon, cantaloupe and brussel sprouts.
Vitamin E	<i>Functions to:</i> Lower cholesterol, boost immunity, help prevent cataracts.
	<i>Found in:</i> Nuts, soybeans, wheat germ and canola oil.
Calcium	<i>Functions to:</i> Build and maintain strong bones.
	<i>Found in:</i> Milk, yogurt, cheese, beans, broccoli, leafy greens.

WEIGHT AND THE MAN

It's one of those questions you hate to answer: "How much do you weigh?" That's because over half of us are overweight and 21 percent are obese.² And the problem is getting worse!

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a way to measure for proper body weight. Find your height in the first column. Scan across to find your weight. The number on top is your BMI.

	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
5'6"	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192
5'7"	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198
5'8"	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203
5'9"	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209
5'10"	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216
5'11"	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222
6'	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228
6'1"	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235
6'2"	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241
6'3"	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248
6'4"	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	254

A healthy BMI value is from 18.5 to 25. Being overweight means having a body mass index number of 25 or above unless the body is well muscled. Obesity is having a BMI of 30 or above.³

Being overweight affects more than your appearance. It is linked with 300,000 deaths in the US each year.⁴ It increases your chances of developing diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer; worsens arthritic pain and depression.

One special concern facing men is the increase in diabetes as weight increases. Diabetes, a chronic disease, can cause blindness, kidney disease, nerve damage, limb amputations and death.

Surprisingly, you can eat a healthy diet even in our fast-paced society. Yes, it takes planning and dedication, but the benefits are huge. Here are some tips:

- Throw a piece of fresh fruit into your briefcase or backpack.
- Order a baked potato instead of French fries.
- Order salad dressing on the side instead of on your salad.
- Hold the cheese on burgers and sandwiches.
- Order half servings at restaurants or take half home.
- Fill sandwich bags with your favorite fruit or vegetable.
- Buy pretzels instead of potato chips.
- Substitute low-fat or fat-free snacks.

Weight loss doesn't mean going on a crash diet. However, to lose weight, eat healthy food with fewer calories and exercise.



Take Action

Hints to establish a healthy diet:

- ✓ *Keep an eating journal: Write down everything you eat, where you eat it and what you're doing while eating. Soon, you will learn your eating patterns, the information you need to adjust your diet.*
- ✓ *Set an achievable weight goal: Slow weight loss — one to two pounds a week — is healthier than fast weight loss.*
- ✓ *Don't skip meals: Skipping meals slows down your metabolism (process of energy production). That's the last thing you want to do when trying to lose weight.*
- ✓ *Drink at least eight glasses (8 oz.) of water each day: Water limits your appetite.*
- ✓ *Eat slowly: Give your body enough time to let you know it's full.*

Be Fit

Start moving, Keep moving

Along with a well-balanced diet, physical activity is key to reaching and maintaining good health. Regular physical activity helps:

- Maintain proper body weight.
- Reduce the risk of serious disease.
- Improve your mood.

WHY?

Simply put, being active is the best way to fight off the common signs of aging. Exercise helps prevent heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis, senility and some forms of cancer. It can also fight off stress and depression and make you sleep better.

Don't worry if you have waited until now to get moving. Young or old, adding more activity to your routine can mean the difference between an active life and maybe an early death. If you plan on vigorous activity and it has been several years since you have been active, you should consider getting approval from your doctor before kicking off an exercise program. Other wise enjoy being active.

HOW MUCH?

Start your exercise plan slowly, with 5 to 10-minute sessions. Then, gradually build up your endurance to at least 30 minutes on most days of the week.

WHAT KIND?

Just as with life, variety is the spice of a fitness plan that works. Your routine should include:

- An activity like walking or aerobics to raise your heart rate for 25 minutes or more. Consider tennis, cycling, swimming, running, rowing and racquetball.
- Weightlifting to strengthen muscles and bones.
- Stretching to improve flexibility.

One way to keep interested in exercise is to vary your workout plan. This way you use different parts of your body and get a complete body workout. Healthy physical activity isn't only limited to spending countless hours at the gym. Household chores and walking can improve your overall physical fitness too.



Take Action

You say you don't have time to exercise? These tips will fit physical activity into your busy schedule:

- ✓ Take quick, vigorous walks during breaks.
- ✓ Ride a bicycle, skate, run or walk to work or to do errands.
- ✓ Plan a hiking trip with your friends.
- ✓ Create a written schedule listing when and where you will exercise. Then, stick to it.
- ✓ Include your family or dog in your exercise plan.

PREVENTING SPORTS INJURIES

Sometimes, bad things happen to good people. If you're not careful, you could suffer a serious injury while exercising. Three of the most common injuries are to the knee, ankle and back.

Back pain is nothing to laugh at. At some time or another, most of us suffer from it. It is much easier to prevent a back injury than it is to recover from one.

- Keep your back straight (and strong) when you go to pick up something.
- Bend at your hips and knees.
- Heavy things are less likely to be too much for your back if you carry them close to your body.

Other common sports-related injuries:

- Fractures - breaks in bones.
- Strains - too much demand is put on a muscle.
- Sprains - ligaments are torn or strained.
- Tendonitis - tendon becomes inflamed.

As you probably know, any injury to the testicles is very painful. Normally, if the pain goes away within an hour, you can assume that no serious damage has been done. If the pain continues or bruising or swelling occurs, get medical treatment right away. To prevent testicular injuries, wear protective equipment and clothing.



Take Action

You can avoid sports injuries by:

- ✓ Stretching and warming up for 10 minutes before exercising.
- ✓ Cooling down after exercising.
- ✓ Choosing activities that do not over use sore areas.
- ✓ Taking care of injuries.
- ✓ Wearing the proper protective equipment and clothing.

What About Sex?

Better health, Better sex

The healthier you are the better chance that your sex life will be healthy as well. What you put into your body plays a key role in sexual health.

- **Smoking:** Chemicals that enter your body through smoking narrow the blood vessels to your penis and scrotum. This affects the quality of your erection.
- **Fat:** Just as it affects the rest of your body, being overweight can weaken your sexual health. Cholesterol can clog the arteries in your penis, again affecting the quality of your erection.
- **Exercise:** In physical terms, exercise builds your endurance and muscle and reduces the amount of cholesterol in your blood. You feel better and feel sexier. In emotional terms, exercise improves our mood. Since sex includes being emotionally intimate as well as physically intimate, a better mood can mean better sex.
- **Alcohol:** Your physical reaction as well as mental sharpness is slowed. Plus, you tend to make bad choices when you've been drinking.

CONTRACEPTION

Plain and simple, contraception is both partners'

responsibility. If you decide to have intercourse, you need to protect yourself as well as your partner from an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Don't wait to talk about protection until a second before that special moment. It's wise to talk intimately with your partner about preventing pregnancy and disease before becoming physically intimate. You and your partner probably will weigh many considerations before deciding which method of protection is the best for your relationship.

If used properly, a condom can be an effective birth control method. Proper use of a condom means more than slipping one on in the heat of the moment. Be sure to carefully read the instruction sheet that comes with the condom. Take your time when putting it on your penis. And most importantly, wear a condom every time you engage in sex.

If you're involved sexually with only one person, and you and your partner have determined that your family is complete, you might consider vasectomy as your method of birth control. A vasectomy is a minor surgical procedure to close the tubes that carry sperm. It is your best option for permanent birth control.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES (STDs)

STDs are diseases spread through sexual contact. Your risk of STDs increases with the number of sex partners. Practicing safe sex (use condoms) can prevent most STDs. Most STDs can be treated successfully if they are found early.

Men don't have early symptoms to many STDs. The most common STDs include:

- **Genital herpes**, a viral infection with no cure. Herpes appears as blisters on your penis, rectum and your mouth that come and go. In addition to sores, symptoms include headaches, fever, muscle aches and swollen lymph nodes.
- **AIDS/HIV**, the most deadly of all STDs, also has no cure. HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, attacks and destroys your immune system. Many times it causes other life-threatening diseases. Symptoms include fever, diarrhea, night sweats, sudden and unexplained weight loss, fatigue and swollen glands.

Men of all sexual orientations, as well as injecting drug users, can get AIDS. To reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS infection:

The ABCS of Safer Sex

Abstinence – Avoid sex.

Be monogamous – Only one person.

Condoms – Use correctly, talk to your partner.

Safer Sex – Alternative practices.

Understand what influences your decision and behaviors. Reduce your risk by keeping condoms available, and avoiding sex when drunk. Also, negotiate safe sex in advance and refuse unsafe sex coercion.

- **Gonorrhea** is one of the most common and curable STDs. Symptoms include having a tingling sensation in your urethra. Other signs are painful milky discharge and painful urination.
- **Genital warts** are caused by a viral infection. They should be treated immediately because they spread quickly. Symptoms are tiny, flat or cauliflower-like wart clusters.
- **Chlamydia** is the most common and fastest spreading STD. One-quarter of those infected with chlamydia will become sterile.⁵ Symptoms include penile discharge, dull pain in your lower abdomen and itching and burning in your penis and scrotum. Early detection is key.
- **Syphilis** is a dangerous bacteria-based STD. Symptoms range from reddish bumps developing on your penis, anus and mouth, to body rash and many other symptoms. Untreated syphilis may end in serious damage to the heart, brain and spinal cord, and even death.



Take Action

- ✓ Wearing a condom is the best method that you can use to protect yourself and your partner from STDs.
- ✓ Protect yourself against STDs by avoiding petroleum-based lubricants, because they can weaken latex condoms.
- ✓ Learn as much as you can about your partner.

IMPOTENCE

This is one problem men never want to talk about. Occasional bouts of impotence are not unusual and are usually due to stress or overdrinking. Frequent episodes of impotence that doesn't go away may be a sign of a serious medical problem, such as heart disease or diabetes. A number of factors can cause impotence, including:

- Physical causes: Diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, prostate cancer surgery, drinking too much alcohol, tobacco use, some prescription drugs, illegal drugs.
- Psychological causes: Depression, stress, worrying about sexual performance, relationship problems with your partner.

Impotence that does not go away is a reason to visit your doctor. Doctors routinely treat men with impotence. They can provide a course of action.

INFERTILITY

Infertility, a woman's inability to become pregnant, is a devastating problem that affects many couples of child-bearing age. Fertility problems occur in just as many men as women. Causes include STDs, impotence, heart disease, low sperm count and sperm deformities. New treatments for infertility are available and effective.

Mental and Emotional Health

Win over Stress

DEALING WITH STRESS

Stress is a fact of life these days. We have stress from many sources: home, work, relationships. Normal stress can be positive. Constant stress becomes a problem. Too much stress can have bad effects on your health.

Here are some ways to loosen the grip that stress has on your life:

- Exercise.
- Eat right.
- Laugh.
- Learn to say "no."
- Live within your budget.
- Develop a forgiving attitude.
- Simplify and unclutter your life. Reconsider your priorities and drop tasks you don't care about or do only out of guilt.



DEPRESSION

Everyone feels blue from time to time. But there's more to depression than the blues.

Depression is a misunderstood and many times untreated mental health problem. It is a disease that affects your mood and can involve every one of your body's systems. Simply put, depression can affect your entire life. It can be caused by physical and emotional illness.

Those with a family history of depression are more likely to suffer from it. Bouts of depression can be debilitating and destructive. The good news is that depression can be treated with psychotherapy, anti-depressant medication or both.

Signs and symptoms of depression include:

- You feel sad or withdrawn and it doesn't go away.
- You have little interest in what you used to like.
- You feel guilty for no reason.
- You've lost your confidence.
- Life seems meaningless.
- You lose your appetite and lose weight for no reason.
- You overeat or gain weight.
- Your sleeping patterns change.
- You feel restless and tired most of the time.
- You have thoughts about death and suicide.

Many men resist seeking treatment. That's just not smart. Untreated depression can lead to many other problems.

You should seek help from your doctor if you suffer from several of the symptoms for at least two weeks or if any of the symptoms have changed your lifestyle.



Take Action

Ways to fight depression include:

- ✓ Find supportive family and friends to talk to about your feelings.
- ✓ Get involved in activities you enjoy.
- ✓ Avoid isolating yourself.
- ✓ Keep up with your daily routine.
- ✓ Exercise regularly.
- ✓ Eat right.
- ✓ Avoid alcohol.

SUICIDE

Suicide can be one result of untreated depression. Unfortunately, it is an all-too-common way out of the pain of mental illness. You need to get treated for depression because:

- Nearly twice as many Americans die from suicide than from homicide.
- Suicide is the eighth-leading cause of death in the United States.
- Men are four times more likely to die from suicide than are women.
- Men accounted for 73 percent of all suicides in 1998.⁶

Know that help is available. Call 1-800-SUICIDE or a local crisis center to talk to a counselor if you feel suicidal.

Substance Abuse

Get Help–Quitting Takes Practice

Addiction to legal and illegal substances is a major problem facing men of all walks of life. Its toll can be measured in lost lives, relationships, and money. Addictive illegal substances like cocaine, marijuana and heroin can damage your body and mind.

Sudden and drastic changes in your behavior are a sign of abuse problems.

- Grooming and physical appearance goes downhill.
- Withdrawal from responsibilities.
- Loss of interest in things you like.
- Increased anger or a general attitude change.
- Sudden change in work or school attendance.
- Staying away from family and friends.
- Stealing from employer, school or home.
- Borrowing money often.

Don't overlook the problem of addiction to legal substances like prescription drugs, over the counter drugs, herbal medication and alcohol. It can be dangerous to take any one else's medication. Never share your medication with someone else.

TOBACCO

Smoking is a very destructive abuse and is a major risk factor in heart disease, cancer, and impotency. More men die from tobacco-related illnesses every year than from alcohol, cocaine, heroin, AIDS, murder, suicide, auto accidents and fires combined.

Quitting smoking and alcohol will:

- Reduce your risk of heart attack, lung cancer and stroke.
- Increase your energy.
- Improve sexual performance.



Take Action

It may seem impossible to quit once you have started, but it can be done! Millions of Americans quit tobacco every year because they know it is one of the best things they can do to have a healthier life. Even if you have tried to quit before, keep trying – quitting takes practice. You'll be healthier and you'll save money, too! Many need help from healthcare providers and mental health counselors to come to terms with their addictions.

How can you end addiction?

- ✓ *Admit the problem to yourself and those around you.*
- ✓ *Limit the time you spend with people who encourage substance abuse.*
- ✓ *Talk to your doctor about treatment options – your insurance may cover it. Many products are available to beat tobacco addiction.*
- ✓ *Find support from loved ones.*

See the end of the Guide for sources of help.

Safety and Injury Prevention

Watch Out!

MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES

The average man is twice as likely to die in a car crash in comparison to the average woman. We drive faster, don't like seat belts and are more likely to drive drunk.⁷



Take Action

These precautions can help prevent a car crash or other accidents, and increase your chances of survival:

- ✓ ALWAYS wear a seatbelt, even on short trips! The air bag alone will not protect you.
- ✓ If you have been drinking or using drugs, don't drive or operate any type of motorized vehicle, such as a boat, lawn mower, or tractor.
- ✓ Do not ride with someone who has been using alcohol or drugs.
- ✓ ALWAYS wear a helmet when riding a motorcycle or bicycle.

HOMICIDE

Men are three times more likely to be killed than are women. And, African-American men have a six times greater risk of death by homicide than do white men.⁸ How can this risk be lowered? Programs to prevent violence are one important strategy.

Take Action

- ✓ Don't keep guns in the house.
- ✓ Keep guns unloaded and locked up.
- ✓ Lock up ammunition in a separate place.

SAFETY AT HOME

A functioning smoke detector (fresh batteries) can save your life. A fire extinguisher and a CO (carbon monoxide) detector are also important home safety tools.

Falls at home can lead to serious injury and death. Older men are more likely to die from falls. Staying strong and active can go a long way towards keeping you "on your feet." Also, be aware of your vision and pay attention to your medication use. These too are factors in staying safe.



Take Action

To prevent falls, follow these ideas for a safer home:

- ✓ Improve lighting in dark areas.
- ✓ Install railings along stairways.
- ✓ Remove loose rugs.
- ✓ Cover slippery surfaces with non-skid material.

Domestic Violence

End Abuse

Domestic violence is a serious public health issue, with major consequences. It takes many forms, including emotional abuse (threats, blame, isolation), economic abuse, battering, rape, sexual abuse, and even murder.

Abuse is not simply a female problem, or a poor person problem, or a drug/alcohol user problem. More men than you might think abuse someone they care about. Someone you know probably does. In fact, domestic violence is the single largest cause of injury to females between the ages of 15 and 44 in the US.⁹

Children who live with violence may see it as a natural part of adult relationships. They may then become offenders or victims themselves one day. Children, like adults, are more likely to be abused or sexually assaulted by family members or friends than by strangers.

The victim is never the cause of the abuse. The perpetrator chooses to abuse.

Take Action

- ✓ Don't remain silent.
- ✓ If you suspect that someone close to you is being abused, gently ask if you can help.
- ✓ Mentor and teach young boys about how to be men without abusing or degrading others.
- ✓ If you are abusing your partner, seek help.

Prevention

Regular Maintenance

Just because you feel fine doesn't mean you're healthy. Your health care provider can determine whether you're as healthy as an ox or need some tender loving care to become your best.

This section will discuss the most prevalent diseases that affect men. Many of these serious and long term conditions can be prevented or their course slowed with healthy lifestyle choices.

HEART DISEASE

Heart disease affecting the heart and blood vessels, is the most significant health threat to men today. If the arteries that provide blood to the heart become completely blocked, a heart attack can occur.

Risk factors for heart disease include:

- Eating a diet high in cholesterol and saturated fat.
- Having high blood pressure.
- Not exercising.
- Being overweight.
- Having diabetes.
- Smoking.



Hypertension means high blood pressure. Also known as the silent killer, it raises your chances for a stroke or heart attack. You may not have any symptoms with high blood pressure. Your blood pressure measurement should be less than 140/90.

If you have one or more of the following signs of heart attack or stroke, don't wait! Call 911 fast!

Warning signs of heart attack include:

- Pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back.
- Pain that spreads to the shoulders, neck or arms.
- Chest pain with dizziness, fainting, sweating, nausea or shortness of breath.

Warning signs of stroke include:

- Sudden weakness or numbness of face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause.

Take Action

How can you control heart disease? Manage the risk factors.

- ✓ Stop smoking.
- ✓ Control blood pressure.
- ✓ Eat a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- ✓ Exercise.
- ✓ Cope with stress.
- ✓ Have regular medical exams.
- ✓ Keep weight under control.

CANCER

There is a reason cancer is called the big "C." Needless to say, cancer is a major threat to men's health.

Lung cancer is the most common cause of cancer-related death in men. Cigarette smoking causes 90 percent of those deaths. Stopping smoking is the single most important thing you can do to improve your health and prevent lung cancer.

Prostate cancer is the 2nd leading cause of cancer-related deaths. It can be cured or controlled if it is found and treated early. As men get older, the prostate gland gets bigger. Many men get treated for an enlarged prostate. If prostate infections go untreated, the bladder and other organs can be damaged.

Symptoms of prostate problems include:

- Weak stream of urine
- Pain or burning feeling while urinating
- Trouble starting or holding urination
- Urinating often, especially at night
- Dripping after urination
- Low back or groin area pain
- Blood in the urine

Take Action

- ✓ Tell your doctor about any problems with urination.
- ✓ Talk with your doctor about having a digital rectal exam (DRE) and a prostate specific antigen (PSA) test every year, starting at age 50.
- ✓ If in a high-risk group (African-American or family history of prostate cancer), discuss DRE and PSA test yearly, starting at age 40.

Colorectal cancer is in third place for cancer-related deaths. It is the cancer of the colon and rectum, which are parts of the body's digestive system. When found early, colorectal cancer is highly treatable and curable.

Take Action

- ✓ If you are 50 or older have a colorectal screening test.
- ✓ Improve your diet—with less animal fat and more fiber, such as whole grains.
- ✓ Exercise regularly.

Testicular cancer is a common type of cancer in men from age 20-35. Examining the testicles can help detect cancer in the early stages when it is highly curable. The testicular self-exam should begin at age 15 and continue until 40.

It is important to do testicular exams every month in order to detect any changes. The best time to do a testicular exam is after bathing, when heat causes the skin of the scrotum to relax.

Take Action

To do a testicular self-exam:

- ✓ Look at the scrotum for swelling.
- ✓ Feel each testicle separately by rolling it between your thumb and the first two fingers of both hands. It is normal for one testicle to be larger than the other.
- ✓ Check for lumps, swelling, or a change in size or consistency of the testicle.
- ✓ Feel the normal cord-like structure on the top and back of each testicle.

Call your doctor if any lumps or abnormalities are found. Also, tell your doctor about aching in the lower abdomen or groin. Also report a feeling of heaviness in the scrotum. This may be a warning sign of cancer.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer and is increasing faster than any other form. Ultraviolet radiation from the sun is the chief cause. Risk factors include fair skin, sunburn during childhood, and birthmarks or moles. Finding and treating it early can lead to a cure in most types.



Take Action

- ✓ Use a high-protection sunscreen.
- ✓ Do a regular and careful inspection of your skin to look for changes.
- ✓ If possible do not stay out in the sun for long periods from 10 am to 4 pm.
- ✓ Wear clothing to cover your skin, and a hat.

DIABETES

Diabetes is a disorder in which sugar in the blood is higher than normal. It occurs when too little of the hormone insulin is produced, or the body fails to use insulin properly. The more common Type 2 usually begins after age 30 and becomes more common with age. A family history of diabetes means you are more likely to develop it.

Left untreated or poorly controlled, diabetes can lead to blindness, heart disease, kidney disease, nerve and blood vessel damage, amputation, and problems in fighting infection. Men with diabetes are more likely to have high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol and be overweight. This puts them at a higher risk for heart attack and stroke.

Take Action

You can reduce your risk of diabetes:

- ✓ *Keep your weight down.*
- ✓ *Lower the fat content of your diet.*
- ✓ *Exercise regularly.*
- ✓ *Control blood sugar, the key to living healthy with diabetes.*

ARTHRITIS

This chronic condition affects bones and joints. Osteoarthritis is the most common type. It occurs when the cushioning between bones wears away. The pain can be treated with a number of medications.

Take Action

- ✓ *Control weight.*
- ✓ *Continue low impact exercise.*

ASTHMA

Breathing problems are increasing rapidly, as our air and environment contain more irritants to our lungs. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) includes two conditions in which airflow from the lungs is blocked—emphysema and chronic bronchitis. COPD is slowly more and more disabling. There is no cure. Smoking is the leading cause. The main treatment is to stop smoking.

Take Action

To keep asthma under control:

- ✓ *Know what starts your asthma attacks and avoid it.*
- ✓ *Use asthma treatments correctly.*
- ✓ *Stop smoking.*

Many of the risk factors for these chronic conditions can be controlled. Do what you can as early as you can!



HEALTH BEGINS WITH YOU

Take Action

- ✓ *Use this Guide to take charge of areas of your health that you have control over.*
- ✓ *Put together your personal health team. Ask questions.*
- ✓ *Get regular check-ups and health screenings.*
- ✓ *Keep track of your health information.*

Get Checkups and Keep Records

Complete, then take this guide with you when you see your doctor.

Insurance Carrier _____

Insurance # _____

HMO: ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Social Security # _____
(optional)

Allergies/Sensitivities _____

Blood Type _____

YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH TEAM

A team may include all your doctors, eye doctor, dentist, and pharmacist.

Name

Phone

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

HEALTH EXAMS & SCREENINGS

Your doctor will use these tests to find out how healthy you really are.

		Date/ Results
BLOOD PRESSURE	*Every 2 years	
CHOLESTEROL	*Every 5 years	
COLON EXAM Checks for cancer	*Every 3-5 years after age 50	
BLOOD SUGAR Checks for diabetes	*First test by age 45, then every 3 years	
BODY MEASUREMENT Height & weight	*Periodically	
DENTAL	*Regularly	
EYE/VISION Checks for glaucoma	*Every 3-5 years, yearly after age 50	

* Recommended frequencies from national health organizations.

Write down the date and results when you have these exams.

Date/ Results	Date/ Results	Date/ Results	Date/ Results

Check with your doctor for specific recommendations.

HEALTH EXAMS & SCREENINGS

		Date/ Results
HEARING	*First test by age 60, then periodically	
PSA DRE Exams for prostate cancer	*For high risk groups - Yearly after age 40 *For all others - Yearly after age 50	
EKG Checks heart	*First test by age 40, then periodically	
SKIN INSPECTION Checks for skin cancer	*Every 2-3 years, then every year after age 50	
HEPATITIS	*Per risk factors	
HIV AND SYPHILIS	*Per risk factors	

* Recommended frequencies from national health organizations.

Write down the date and results when you have these exams.

Date/ Results	Date/ Results	Date/ Results	Date/ Results

Check with your doctor for specific recommendations.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Vaccine	Date	Doctor or Location (Health professional to complete)			
Measles Mumps Rubella					
Chicken Pox					
Diphtheria Tetanus					
Hepatitis B					
Hepatitis A <i>Per risk status</i>					
Influenza (Flu Shot) <i>Age 50 & older</i>					
Pneumonia <i>Age 65 & older</i>					
Other					

HEALTH HISTORY

Use this record, along with the charts, to jot down when you receive medical procedures, tests and health screenings. You can also include details of test results here.

[illegible]

Pharmacy	Phone #	
Drug Allergies		
Drug	Reaction	
<p>List medications and other health products, including supplements, you are taking. Place a line through those you are no longer taking.</p>		
Medication	Dose	How Often

INFORMATION SOURCES:

American Cancer Society, www.cancer.org
American College of Sports Medicine
American Dental Assoc., www.ada.org
American Diabetes Assoc., www.diabetes.org
American Heart Assoc., www.americanheart.org
Center for AIDS Intervention Research, www.cair.mcw.edu
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, www.cdc.gov
Mayo Clinic Health Information
National Cancer Institute
National Institute of Mental Health, www.nimh.nih.gov
New England Journal of Medicine
Planned Parenthood Federation, www.plannedparenthood.org

ENDNOTES:

1. USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2000
2. National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, Obesity Guidelines
3. NHLBI, Obesity Guidelines – BMI Chart
4. Nat. Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
5. Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc. Web Site 2000
6. National Institute of Mental Health
7. National Highway Traffic Safety Association
8. National Center for Health Statistics
9. American College of Emergency Physicians

*This **Men's Health Guide** is designed for educational purposes only. Do not rely on this information in place of getting personal medical attention. If you feel that you have a medical problem, you should see a health care professional as soon as possible. This information should not be used for diagnosis and treatment purposes. We can not accept responsibility for any problems that may develop from following these guidelines.*

For Help and Information

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
800-662-4357 or www.cdc.gov

Men's Health Network
202-543-6461 or www.menshealthnetwork.org

Aging - Administration on Aging
202-619-0724 or www.aoa.dhhs.gov

Arthritis - Georgia Chapter-Arthritis Foundation
800-933-7023 or www.arthritis.org

Cancer - American Cancer Society 800-227-2345, www.cancer.org
Georgia Cancer Coalition www.gacancercoalition.com

Diabetes - Georgia Chapter - American Diabetes Association
888-342-2383 or www.diabetes.org

Family Violence - Georgia Commission On Family Violence
404-657-3412 or www.georgiacourts.org/familyviolence

Heart Disease & Stroke - American Heart Association
800-242-8721 or www.americanheart.org

HIV/AIDS - AIDS Research Consortium of Atlanta
404-827-2873 or www.aidsresearchatlanta.org

Lung Disease - Georgia Chapter - American Lung Association
800-586-4872 or www.lungusa.org/georgia

Mental Health - National Mental Health Association of Georgia
404-527-7175 or www.nmhag.org

Prostate Cancer - Georgia Prostate Cancer Coalition 770-394-6794
National Prostate Cancer Coalition 888-245-9455 or www.4npcc.org

Smoking - UNITE GEORGIA 404-657-6649 or
www.unitegeorgia.com Quit Line 877-270-STOP(7867)

Stress - American Institute of Stress
914-963-1200 or www.stress.org

Suicide - American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
888-333-2377 or www.afsp.org

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